

### Young Folks.

#### MISS POLLY'S FOURTH.

Did ever you hear of Miss Polly Shannon,  
Who nearly goes mad at the sight of a cannon?  
Just outside of Bristol she lives all alone,  
And haan't so much as a cat of her own!  
While dreaming the thought of the Fourth of July,  
She said to herself, "I shall certainly fly!"  
Then suddenly there popped in her head the way  
Most serenely to spend our National Day.

At evening, she plugged all the key-holes with  
wax,  
And over each window hung blankets from tacks;  
Then, filling her ears full of pink cotton-batting,  
She tied on her night-cap, all ruffled and tattling,  
And said to herself, "Now we'll see if that cannon  
At four in the morning will rouse Polly Shannon!"

The Mayor of Bristol, however, was sick,  
And even so low as to mind the clock's tick;  
And, therefore, the Council made haste to proclaim,  
By means of great posters, in letters of flame:  
"BECAUSE OF HIS HONOR THE MAYOR'S CON-  
DITION,

Pronounced very critical by the physician,  
To-morrow no cracker, gun, cannon or pistol  
Shall once be shot off in the city of Bristol.  
Police are instructed, and will, without fail,  
Most promptly remand all offenders to jail."

Just think of the grief of those poor Bristol boys  
When reading this placard which vetoed their joys!  
But Polly slept sweetly, for no thunderous roar  
Of cannon terrific awoke her at four!  
'Twas late when she rose, with supreme satisfac-  
tion,  
Preparing herself for a day of inaction;  
For how could she work—the house dark as a  
pocket,

And mercury going way up like a rocket?  
But when perspiration meant peace and protection,  
She felt she could stand it with little objection.  
So all the day long in the darkness and heat  
She sweltered and worried, while outside the sweet  
Ripe fragrance of summer pervaded the air,  
The birds gave their concerts, all nature was fair,  
While never a gun, a torpedo, nor pistol,  
The ghost of a sound woke in solemn old Bristol!

The next morning came. With a sense of release  
Which filled her whole soul with contentment and  
peace,  
She tossed wax and cotton far out of her sight,  
Threw wide doors and windows, and gazed with  
delight!  
Her neighbor, Dick Jones, came and lounged on  
her gate:

"Good mornin'! How are ye? You're up rather  
late  
I thought you was sick, 'twas so sort of shut up!  
Too bad on the boys, that 'are bill they put up!"  
"What bill?" "Ain't ye heard?" "That's why  
'twas so still."

They put off the Fourth 'cause the Mayor's so ill."  
"And didn't they shoot off the cannon at all?"  
Cried Polly, amazed. "Not a gun great or small;  
There ain't been a day, as I know on, this year  
So dead level still as 'twas yesterday here!"

Miss Polly said only, "Well, there! I declare!"  
Then slammed to the door, and dropped into a  
chair:  
With look very sheepish, and manner less curt,  
She thought, "After this I won't cry till I'm  
hurt."

Wide Awake.

#### HOW THE BRITISH BEAT PHRASTUS

"N" she says I sha'n't spend one cent for  
crackers nor torpydoes, nor go down to see the  
p'rade, nor any of the boys. She says I've got  
to stay hum and keep still this Fourth."

The prospect was evidently dire to Theophras-  
tus Wilson, but the person to whom he poured  
out his woes only twinkled a pair of merry eyes.  
Harvey Harris was several years older than  
'Phrastus, but he listened with an interest very  
comforting to the smaller boy.

"She says I kin take the old hoss-pistle, 'n'  
fire it off once down behind the barn. 'N' I kin  
tie dad's old flag to a boomstick, and wave it  
about all I want. Who wants an old broom-  
stick 'round anyway? That aint no Fourth of  
July."

'Phrastus sniffed—he almost sniveled. His  
hearer laughed outright.  
"Say, 'Phrastus, what under the canopy did  
you do last Fourth that makes Aunt 'Scilla set-  
tle down on you like this?"  
"Nothin'," said 'Phrastus sullenly.

"Oh pahaw! I know you, and I know Aunt  
Priscilla. She'd never corner you up so close  
without some reason. Honest, now, out with it,  
and I'll see what I can do for you."  
"There was the cat," said 'Phrastus, digging  
his toes into the ground.

"What about the cat?"  
"She told me to give him his dinner, 'n' I put  
a fire-cracker under the pan. It didn't hurt him  
none, but he never come fer a week; and he  
won't tech codfish sence."  
"Oh, he! What else?"

"The settin' hen," said 'Phrastus, scratching  
his right ear. "I knowed she wanted her broke  
up, 'n' I bet a couple of crackers'd do it."  
"Well, did they?"  
"Guess you'd a thought so! They set the

nest afire, and most burnt up the chicken-  
house."  
'Phrastus actually grinned.  
"Ah, ha! Go ahead; that wasn't all. What  
put on the finishing touch?"

"I s'pose 'twas the new wash-b'iler," said  
'Phrastus, frowning. "We tuk it out behind  
the barn to light a bunch in. My, didn't they  
pop! Then we forgot it teetotal, and come wash-  
day nobody knowed where the b'iler was."  
"And when they found it?"  
"Suthin' had step on it!" muttered 'Phrastus.

"But I don't think folks ought to hold things a  
hull year."  
Harvey threw his head back, and laughed so  
heartily that 'Phrastus stopped frowning and  
giggled.

"Now look here," said Harvey, when he had  
had his laugh out, "I haven't forgotten how you  
found Frowey for me last summer, and if you'll  
promise not to use them around the house or the  
barn, or anywhere where they'll disturb Aunt  
'Scilla, I'll put half a dozen packs under the big  
stone behind the barn for you Fourth of July  
mornin'."

"It's awful good of you!" 'Phrastus's  
cheeks grew shining red. "There sha'n't no-  
body hear 'em 'cept me; I'll take 'em down to  
the woods. And say, I'll hunt your dog every  
time he gets lost—don't you give any other fel-  
ler the job. What they got in that wagon?"

"It must be the English ram Mr. Turner's  
been buyin'," said Harvey, as he turned to  
look. "Gave two hundred dollars for him. I  
guess I'll walk down and see him when they take  
him out."

"Two—hundred—dollars for a sheep!"  
'Phrastus hopped over the fence and trotted  
along by his friend's side. "What a pile of  
money for one sheep! Say, Harvey, 'd you jest  
as lief put in a box of matches and a fi' cent flag  
'stead of two o' them bunches?"

"Just exactly."  
The wagon turned into Mr. Turner's barn-  
yard, and the boys followed it.  
"I bet I'd never pay 'em old British two  
hundred dollars for a sheep," said 'Phrastus,  
thrusting his hands deep into his pockets as he  
watched the men carefully lower the Cotswold  
ram, "King George XII," to the ground.

"What do you know about the British, Bub?"  
asked one of the men.  
"I know we whipped 'em twict—Fourth of  
July," said 'Phrastus.

"Well, it seems they can beat us on sheep,"  
laughed the man.  
"I 'spects if Mr. Turner had looked round  
he'd got jest as good a one in 'Meriker for ten  
dollars!" cried 'Phrastus. "They can't beat us  
on anything!"

Having reached the ground safely, King  
George stamped his royal foot, and shook his  
curved horns. Then, as Mr. Turner entered the  
yard by a side gate, the ram dashed forward  
with unexpected quickness, knocked his new  
owner's feet from under him, and laid him flat  
on his back.

"He's got a good smart temper," remarked  
one of the assis'tants, as King George appeared  
ready to charge the entire force.  
"Serves Mr. Turner right for spending so  
much money on an old British sheep," 'Phrastus  
whispered to Harvey.

Aunt Priscilla noticed with surprise that  
'Phrastus neither whined nor pleaded when she  
reannounced her Fourth of July edict. She re-  
peated the command in order to keep her own  
resolution firm, for she dearly loved the mother-  
less boy, mischievous as he was.

"You haint been giving him money for fire-  
crackers or dossying him up, have ye, Ben?"  
she inquired of her husband.  
"No, I aint," responded Uncle Ben. "But  
jest think on't, Pericilla! The heft of a boy's  
livin' is rumpus, and to choke him off on the  
Fourth! It's—well, it's plaguy cruel! He'll  
bust."

"No, he won't! You jest let him alone, Ben-  
jamin Arbuckle. It's time he learned that cats  
and wash b'ilers and other folks had some rights  
on the Fourth of July's well's boys."

"Where you going, 'Phrastus?" she de-  
manded, when the Fourth at last arrived, as  
quiet in their immediate vicinity as if it had  
been a Sunday.  
"Down to Mr. Turner's wood lot to sail my  
boats."

He had the boats conspicuously tucked under  
his arm. Aunt 'Scilla regarded him with a mix-  
ture of remorse and suspicion.  
"You aint fired off your pistol yet?"  
"No'm; don't want. Once aint nothin'.

It'd sound as if it'd lost itself."  
"Your pa's flag is in there on the table."  
"That's had too much powder a'ready."  
'Phrastus had carefully studied up this smart  
speech in advance.

"Hum!" Aunt Priscilla sniffed. "Well, go  
'long, then. If you go to that p'rade, sir, you  
know what you'll get."  
"Aint goin'."

"And if I hear of your hanging round any of  
the other boys' houses, you'll catch it!"  
"Yes'm."

'Phrastus slouched off with an air of deep-  
seated melancholy till the barn was between  
himself and Aunt 'Scilla's remorseful eyes.  
Harvey had more than kept his promise, and  
'Phrastus executed the final steps of a war dance.  
"Aint he good, though! I'll hunt dogs for  
for him all day. Look at these two big fellers!  
They'll do for Long Toms on the 'Chesapeake'."

It was not yet nine o'clock, but there was ev-  
ery promise of a hot day. The leaves hung motion-  
less; the cattle were already seeking shade.  
'Phrastus rubbed his arm across his perspiring  
face.

"Wonder why it's always so awful hot on the  
Fourth? May be 'cause there's so much fire ev-  
erywhere. Wouldn't it be fun to have a snow  
fort?"

He beguiled the way by a delightful fancy of  
flying snowballs, each carrying a lighted fire-  
cracker, until the climbing of the last fence  
brought him into the edge of the woods.  
Through the pond, a shallow drinking place  
for sheep, a small brook flowed. 'Phrastus sat  
down under a tree, and paddled his bare toes in  
the water with a sigh of content.

"If there was only jest one other feller with  
me, wouldn't it be prime? But then he'd have  
to be the British and get beat, 'cause I'm bound  
to be 'Merican."

'Phrastus had planned a naval engagement  
which should reverse a fact of history. One of  
Uncle Ben's favorite stories was of the ship  
"Chesapeake," when the English ship "Leop-  
ard" forced her to strike her colors in a time of  
peace. Uncle Ben's grandfather had been a  
sailor on the American vessel, and the story  
Uncle Ben loved to listen to as a child, he loved  
to tell to 'Phrastus.

But 'Phrastus had determined that those ships  
should meet again on Mr. Turner's pond with a  
very different result.  
He began his preparations. The five cent flag  
rendered the "Chesapeake" top-heavy; so he  
stuck it in the bank behind her. Truth com-  
pels me to confess that 'Phrastus showed very  
little generosity toward his imaginary foes.

The "Chesapeake" was a full-rigged schooner,  
at least eighteen inches long, with two rows of  
fire-cracker guns on either side. The English  
ship was only a third as large—a block of wood  
whittled roughly into the semblance of a boat,  
with one crooked, wobbling mast. Her comple-  
ment of guns was a meager half-dozen—three on  
a side.

"For you're bound to be blown skyer-higher  
anyway, you old Britisher," said 'Phrastus.  
The two big fire-crackers were placed in posi-  
tion at the "Chesapeake's" bow and stern, and  
the commodore, joyfully striking a match,  
stooped down to fire his guns.

Whack! 'Phrastus shot out into the pond,  
turning a somersault, and scattering matches as  
he went. His line of motion was directly across  
the "Chesapeake." Both her slender masts  
snapped, and the stately vessel careened till her  
whole armament slid off into the water.

'Phrastus's first thought, as he emerged puff-  
ing and sputtering, was that the heat had ex-  
ploded the fire crackers all at once. But when  
he got the water out of his eyes, he saw that the  
British had received unexpected reinforcements.

King George XII, arriving unperceived from  
the rear, had disposed of the American commo-  
dore and now turned his attention to the Stars  
and Stripes, which he jammed into the bank with  
repeated blows of his woolly head.

The patriotic blood of 'Phrastus boiled.  
"Git out of that, you old British ram! Le'  
my flag alone! I'll hit you with a rock, I will!"  
He dug vainly about with his fingers in the  
muddy bed of the pond, but found nothing  
larger than a small pebble. Meantime King  
George's pointed feet were tramping his ammuni-  
tion deep into the soil. 'Phrastus lifted up  
his voice in reproach and lamentation.

"You're the meanest, meanest old sheep that  
ever was! We did beat you, we did, we did!  
Oh, my flag—boo—m'r'r-crackers—hoo—he's  
a sp'illin' every last one! I wish they'd bust  
and turn him wrong-side ou-ou-out."

The howl drew King George's attention to the  
pond. He stood a moment with lowered horns,  
and then plunged threateningly forward, draw-  
ing back, however, as his feet touched the wa-  
ter.

At the forward movement 'Phrastus turned  
and ran. He reached the shore as King George  
came galloping around the curve.  
Up the nearest tree scrambled the small Amer-  
ican. It was not a very large one, and received  
a blow from King George's head which almost  
shook the climber loose before he reached a  
place of safety in the crotch.

For some time—'Phrastus afterward said  
"the hull mornin'," but he was in no condition  
to judge—King George butted the tree, bring-  
ing down upon himself fresh explosions of tearful  
wrath, and all the breakable branches 'Phrastus  
could reach. Afterward he nibbled about in the  
vicinity, returning at intervals to renew the as-

sault, and never going far enough away to per-  
mit the escape of his prisoner.  
Aunt 'Scilla's dinner was late, for Uncle Ben  
went to the parade; but it was an exceptionally  
good one, and there was a puffy little turnover  
at 'Phrastus's place. Aunt 'Scilla rang the lit-  
tle bell, and Uncle Ben rang the big bell, with-  
out bringing any small nephew forward to eat it.

"After all I've said," declared Aunt Priscilla,  
her lips growing ominously thin and tight,  
"that boy's been and gone to the p'rade!"  
"Taint agin nature if he has," said Uncle  
Ben. "When you stretch string too tight, it'll  
snap."

"Something'll snap," said Aunt 'Scilla. Her  
eyes did. "I've got to train up that boy in the  
way he should go, and I mean to do it. Don't  
you dast say a word, Benjamin Arbuckle! If he  
don't learn to go straight now, he'll go crooked  
all his life."

After dinner, she cut two long lilac sprouts,  
and trimmed them with ostentatious care. While  
she was washing dishes in the kitchen, Uncle  
Ben slyly cut tiny slashes along the whole length  
of each switch.

It was the middle of the afternoon, when a  
boy with a dirty, tear marked face and mud-  
stained clothes shuffled into the house. Under  
his arm he carried a dismantled toy schooner, and  
a dilapidated, five cent American flag.

"So, Theophrastus Wilson," greeted Aunt  
'Scilla, "you've been to the p'rade, after all.  
Very well, sir, you're going to remember this  
Fourth of July as long you live. Come straight  
here."

She flourished one of the switches, and it fell  
to pieces in her astonished hands.  
"Guess I shall 'member it," whined 'Phras-  
tus. "I haint been t' the p'rade—I haint. I  
stuck up in a tree this hull everlastin' Fourth,  
with Turner's old ram a buttin' at it tryin' to  
shake me down. I'd had to s'tayed there all  
night, too, likely, if Mr. Turner's Pete hadn't  
come along. You jest ast him."

When Harvey Harris heard of it, he could not  
resist saying, "So the British beat, eh, 'Phras-  
tus?"  
"Just that once!" said 'Phrastus.—Mrs.  
Frank Lee, in *Youth's Companion*.

#### FRED'S FOURTH OF JULY.

He scarce could wait in patient state  
While the laggard days went by,  
Our little Fred with nut-brown head,  
For the grand old Fourth of July.

He thought that noise for girls and boys  
Was enjoyment great and high,  
And noise will be in sway, said he,  
On the grand old Fourth of July.

It came at length, in heat and strength,  
The day that bade thraldom die;  
The boy he rose and donned his clothes  
At dawn on the Fourth of July.

He stamped the floors, he slammed the doors,  
He uttered a joyous cry,  
And showed his joys by din and noise  
At threshold of Fourth of July.

At noon of day the fiery ray  
Made earth all parched and dry,  
And Fred grew ill, he had his fill  
Of the grand old Fourth of July.

His mamma's bed for little Fred,  
Where he might softly lie,  
Was found the best, with sleep and rest,  
For the ending of Fourth of July.

Enjoy the day with noise and play,  
And let the loud crackers fly,  
And celebrate with pomp and state  
The grand old Fourth of July.

Avoid Fred's way, let this plan sway  
As the lustrous time draws nigh:  
O rule yourself, my little elf,  
On the grand old Fourth of July.

Anna D Walker, in *Christian Work*.

#### OUR COUNTRY'S WEALTH.

A bulletin issued by the Census Bureau gives  
us the figures. The "true valuation," or sell-  
ing price, of all property in this country, exclu-  
sive of Alaska—real estate, live stock, farm im-  
plements, mines and quarries, gold and silver,  
machinery, mill products on hand, railroads,  
telegraphs, telephones, ships, canals, with other  
things too numerous to mention—in 1890 was  
\$65,037,091,197. The gain during the preceding  
decade was at least fifty per cent, and probably  
more. The average for every man, woman and  
child in the country is now over \$1,000. Among  
the states New York ranks first in wealth; then  
in order come Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Mas-  
sachusetts. California stands sixth. Nearly  
one-third of the entire wealth of the country is  
found in the New England states, New York,  
New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Ours is "a  
goodly heritage"—particularly this northeast-  
ern corner of it.—Selected.

"It is worth a thousand pounds a year to  
have the habit of looking on the bright side of  
things."